

Case 3629***Vipera latastei* Boscá, 1878 (Reptilia, Serpentes, VIPERIDAE): request for conservation of the original spelling**

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Abstract. There are multifaceted arguments concerning the correct spelling (*latasti* or *latastei*) for the viper named for Fernand Lataste by Boscá in 1878. This application under Article 78.2.3 of the Code seeks confirmation that Boscá (1879) acted as the deemed First Reviser (Article 24.2.4), and requests the Commission to rule that *latastei* Boscá, 1878 is the correct original spelling, that *latasti* Boscá, 1878 is an incorrect original spelling (Article 32.4), and that the names be placed on the Official List and Index respectively.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Serpentes; VIPERIDAE; *Vipera*; *Vipera latasti*; *Vipera latastei*; Iberian Peninsula; North Africa; Lataste's Viper.

1. Boscá (1878), described a new 'forme' of viper from the Iberian Peninsula, and proposed the name '*Vipera Latasti*' (honouring Fernand Lataste) for it, should it be recognized at specific rank; however, it was twice referred to as *Vipera latastei* in the caption for plate 4 (p. 201, figs. 1 and 4). The 'Explication des planches' for plate 4 reads as 'fig 1 et 1^a. *Vipera Latastei* Bosca. . . . Fig. 4. *Vipera Latastei* Bosca, grandeur

naturelle'. It is clear from this that the name *latastei* is attributed to Boscá. In the same volume, the spelling *latasti* is used again in the 'Index des espèces décrites ou citées (p. 353) and in 'Espèces nouvelles décrites dans le Bulletin de 1878' (p. 355).

2. The following year, Boscá (1879) again used the name *Vipera latastei*, notably commenting that he wanted to rectify the brief description previously presented, and in a footnote (p. 76) clearly referred to his description of the species in 1878. He then devoted nine pages to describing the species, its ecology and distribution in the Iberian Peninsula, and followed this detailed review with a formal description in Latin (1879, p. 85) under the heading '*Vipera Latastei* Boscá'. Boscá's use of one of the spellings as valid means that he may be deemed to be the First Reviser under Article 24.2.4 of the Code, provided that both spellings were mentioned. Boscá (1880, 1881) used the name *Vipera latastei* again in subsequent years.

3. The 'Bulletin de la Société Zoologique de France pour l'année 1878, 3^e année' has I-XV + 361 pages and seven plates. There is also an unnumbered 'Errata' sheet bound between pages 201 and 203 that refers back to errata on pages 137, 147, and 148. The publication date for the plates is unknown, but nineteenth century journals frequently published plates after publishing the relevant articles. Plates 1 through 4 were signed by lithographer J. Terrier. The relationships between only plates V–VII and the articles they accompany are mentioned in the text. Page 342 contains an 'Avis' explaining that 'La planche V, tirée depuis près de deux ans, porte par erreur le titre suivant: Bull. Soc. Zool. 1877, pl. III' (it actually illustrates an article which appeared in the previous volume) and 'La planche VI se rapporte au mémoire de M. Tapparone-Canefri ...' (which refers to the article on pp. 244–277). On page 315 'voir la planche VII' appears, and on page 328 there is an 'explication de la planche VII'. On pages 129–132 there are references to 'planches' 1 through 13, which correspond to the figures on plate 3 although there is no reference to the plate itself. There is no further indication in the text regarding the relationship between plates 1 through 4 and their articles. Alonso-Zarazaga (2013), based on information provided by I. Ineich and Jean-Loup D'Hondt (which has turned out to be inaccurate), argued that pages 1–108 of the Bulletin correspond to the first part, pages 109–200 to the second part and pages 201–362 to the third and fourth double part. Alonso-Zarazaga concluded that the 'Explication des planches' for plate 4 (p. 201) was published later than the part containing the description of *Vipera latasti*, and for that reason Boscá (1879) could not be the First Reviser choosing between his different original spellings under Article 24.2.4, because both spellings were not published simultaneously. Close inspection of printed pages near binding margins of the copy of the Bulletin in the Madrid Museum clearly shows that page 201 is printed on the same folded piece of paper (signature) as pages 200 and 199. Pages 200 and 199 were obviously printed at the same time as page 198 because page 199 continues the note 'Mon cher Secrétaire Général' initiated on page 198 and signed by E. Perrier on page 199. The 'Explication des planches' extends over two pages, 200–201, forming the logical end to a part. Page 202, unnumbered and without text, possibly signals the end of the second part, as the same unnumbered and text-free feature is observed with page 108, the last page of the first part. However, the 'Errata' sheet (two unnumbered pages) was almost certainly also published at the same time since its inclusion would indicate a fascicle of 8 pages starting on page 197, as indicated by a number at the bottom right of that page (most fascicles are 16 pages, as is usual, but those completing a part are

sometimes smaller, and 8 pages are easily accommodated). From this information, we conclude that *latasti* and *latastei* were definitely published simultaneously and that Boscá (1879) should be deemed to be the First Reviser under Article 24.2.4. This means that the spelling *latasti* must be considered an incorrect original spelling and therefore unavailable (Article 32.4); it is likely that it resulted from an error, but that cannot be proven.

4. As a result of confusion about the date(s) of publication, and even authorship (summarized in Alonso-Zarazaga, 2013), both spellings have been used by many authors. In addition, Boulenger (1896), in his Catalogue of Snakes of the British Museum, included *Vipera latastei* Boscà, 1878 in the synonymy of what he called *Vipera latastii*, a name he used in other influential works (1891, 1913); few followed his lead, and *latastii* should be considered a subsequent misspelling.

5. We compiled a list of 255 references in which *Vipera latastei* and *Vipera latasti* appear; 185 use *latastei* and 70 use *latasti*. Since its description in 1878 *Vipera latastei* has generally prevailed over *Vipera latasti* in the literature. The spelling *latastei* has been adopted by 175 authors in 100 publications during the last 25 years (1989–2013), whereas the spelling *latasti* has been adopted by 99 authors in 38 publications during the same period. The list of references demonstrating usage of the name *latastei* is held by the Commission Secretariat.

6. The use of the name *latasti* causes confusion in several ways, one of which is database utility. A Zoological Record search (September, 2013) returned 78 publications for *Vipera latastei* and 30 publications for *latasti*; the ISI Web of Science returned 33 references for *Vipera latastei* and 8 for *Vipera latasti*. An additional search using Scopus returned 32 references for *Vipera latastei* and 12 for *Vipera latasti*. Perhaps more important is the fact that legal texts involving conservation action at regional, national, and international levels use the name *latastei*. It would be very difficult to change to another spelling.

7. Saint Girons (1977) stated that *latasti* was a lapsus, and thus the correct spelling should be *latastei*. As with several other authors, he apparently was unaware of the two examples spelled as *latastei* on page 201. Golay et al. (1993) considered *Vipera latastei* a justified emendation, but Alonso-Zarazaga (1998) apparently treated *latastei* Boscá, 1879 as an unjustified subsequent spelling and recommended the use of *latasti*, a conclusion reinforced in Alonso-Zarazaga (2013). McDiarmid et al. (1999) also considered *latastei* to be a justified emendation based on Boscá's (1879) action as First Reviser, while David & Ineich (1999) presented their review arguing their action was that of First Reviser and also selected *latastei* as the correct name for this viper.

8. In spite of these varied efforts, an unsatisfactory situation and nomenclatural confusion remains. We therefore request a Commission ruling under Article 78.2.3 of the Code.

9. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its specific powers to confirm that:

- (a) *latastei* Boscá, 1878 is the correct original spelling of the specific name for the viper named for Fernand Lataste, as selected by Boscá (1879), deemed to be the First Reviser (under Article 24.2.4);

- (b) *latasti* Boscá, 1878 is an incorrect original spelling and therefore unavailable (under Article 32.4);
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *latastei* Boscá, 1878, as published in the binomen *Vipera latastei*, the correct original spelling, as confirmed in (1)(a) above;
- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *latasti* Boscá, 1878, as published in the binomen *Vipera latasti* the incorrect original spelling, as confirmed in (1)(b) above.

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Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the *Bulletin*; they should be sent to I.C.Z.N. Secretariat, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).